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SECRETARY HERZFELDER ANNOUNCES \$600,000 IN
GRANTS TO SIX COMMUNITIES FOR URBAN RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION

Environmental Affairs Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder today announced grants totaling \$600,000 to six communities – Athol, Easthampton, Fall River, Hudson, Lawrence, Worcester – for implementation of plans to revitalize their riverfront areas. The funds are being distributed under the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' UrbanRiver Visions Program, which is a program launched in 2002 that uses urban rivers as a focus for redevelopment efforts.

"The UrbanRiver Visions Program is a sustainable development approach that makes environmental sense and development sense by allowing us to direct future growth to where it is most appropriate – urban and downtown areas where infrastructure is already in place," said Secretary Herzfelder. "The grant program helps these communities protect their environmental assets while promoting smart economic and neighborhood development."

In 2002, EOEa convened a collaborative planning process called the UrbanRiver Visions Initiative to develop a vision and action plan for urban riverfronts in seven cities and towns in Massachusetts, each chosen to achieve a mix of size and geographic location: Athol, Chicopee, Easthampton, Fall River, Hudson, Lawrence, and Worcester. Under the program, people in each of the municipalities created a unique plan based on their community's needs, including housing, natural resource conservation, recreation, and commercial development. The funds being awarded are for the implementation of the recommendations from these municipalities' plans.

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FY 05 UrbanRiver Visions Implementation Grant Awards:

A \$64,300 grant will be given to Athol for the final design and construction documents for a riverfront park and two water access points along the Millers River. The park will include a parking area and a small dock for carry-in boat access to the river and trails. The other access point will be behind the Athol Police Station and will include a ramp or stairs to access the river.

A \$142,000 grant will be given to Easthampton to create final design plans and bidding documents for the Lower Mill Pond Park and to begin site clearance. The park area extends from Ferry Street to behind the Eastworks Building. Public input will inform the design and special attention will be paid to connecting the park to the mills and to Pleasant Street.

Fall River will receive \$25,000 to complete conceptual design and feasibility of a “spur” bike path from Dave’s Beach to the main Quequechan River Bike Path. In addition, artwork and text for interpretive signage for the bike path and for Britland Park will be developed.

Hudson will receive \$19,661 for design, engineering, and legal work associated with streetscape improvements and the burying of utilities in the River Visions project area. This funding will supplement a larger DHCD-funded project, accomplishing work critical to applying for funding to implement streetscape improvements.

A \$257,039 grant is being awarded to Lawrence for the final design and construction documents for the city’s Skate Park, FEMA Park, and City owned park at the intersection of Canal and Union. The FEMA Park design will include a “shared street” concept for Marion Street and a walking path along the Spicket River. Also funded will be conceptual plans for the Methuen/Union/Canal block. These plans will contemplate various options including a new pedestrian-oriented sidewalk right-of-way; a Newbury Street pedestrian link and a new public park/plaza at the northwest corner of Canal and Union Streets.

Worcester will receive \$92,000 to complete the final design and construction documents for Phase I of the Blackstone Gateway Park. Components of Phase I include the design of a pocket/entry park along Millbury Street between McKeon Road and Hurley Square, the engineering and design of a pedestrian bridge across the Blackstone River to access the upland trail section, the design of three observation platforms and the development of an interpretive signage program.

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